

## BRIAND VINDICATES FRENCH PRECAUTION

Speech Helps Work of Peace  
and Good Will, Asserts  
British Editor.

### NO MORAL ISOLATION

Balfour and Hughes Quick  
to Assure Premier of  
Full Sympathy.

### SITTING A LANDMARK

Proceedings Insure Another  
Step Forward Toward Con-  
ference Success.

By WICKHAM STEED.

Editor of the London Times.

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 21.—There is one outstanding and salutary difference between the plenary sessions of the Washington conference and those of the peace conference in Paris. Formality and a feeling that what was being said in public was not what was being thought and done in private vitiated all the public proceedings of the Paris gathering save possibly the final ceremony of the signature of peace.

At Washington there have now been three plenary sittings. Of the first it is superfluous again to speak. It set the tone, and indeed the pace, of the conference, and lifted it to a plane from which it cannot easily descend.

#### A Beneficent Sitting.

In a less dramatic fashion the second public sitting was worthy of the first; but when the moment comes to look back upon the conference as a whole I wonder whether the public sitting of Monday, November 21, will not seem as beneficent as either of its predecessors.

It may have grown out of a misunderstanding, but if so, the misunderstanding was happy. Last week Mr. Balfour, in reviewing the matters with which the Washington conference could not hope fully to deal, mentioned land armaments, and said they would have to be considered at another time and treated by other means. Possibly on account of differences of language these remarks were in some quarters interpreted as an oblique allusion to the size of the French army, and the French Prime Minister's reply was also looked upon as an answer to an indirect challenge.

#### Pleasant Anticipation.

In point of fact nothing was further from Mr. Balfour's intention than to reflect invidiously upon the French position. His purpose in enumerating matters with which this conference would

be unable fully to deal was to clear the ground for the consideration of the limitation of naval armaments. Mr. Briand himself readily understood the true character of Mr. Balfour's words, and, as he subsequently remarked to a friend, "Mr. Balfour is not the sort of man who speaks obliquely." But he availed himself of the opening to ask that an opportunity be given him to state the French case to the American public and to the world, and Mr. Hughes gladly granted the request.

Interest in his statement was naturally keen. Mr. Briand's great reputation as an orator has been enhanced by the two short speeches he has made since his arrival. Besides, American sympathy for France is so lively that the favored public which is within reach of tickets was certain to gather in strength, eager to hear and to applaud the French statesman's demonstration.

In no quarter was the feeling of pleasurable anticipation of Mr. Briand's speech keener than among the members of the British delegation. They felt that by reason of the comparative weakness of her navy France had not hitherto played at the conference a part commensurate with the greatness of her services, the splendor of her valor and the immensity of her sufferings in the war.

It was therefore hoped that Monday's proceedings might redress the balance. It was also hoped that the French Prime Minister might be able to destroy once and for all the effects of the "poisonous propaganda" which he recently denounced and to convince the American people that France is neither imperialist nor militarist, nor solely absorbed in the thought of her own losses during the war and the right to reparation which they entail.

#### Expectations Fulfilled.

Those who know Mr. Briand know also that he regards the European situation in a constructive spirit; that he is anxious to maintain the closest cooperation with England, and even to collaborate with a democratic Germany in the task of mitigating the dislocation caused by the war. They felt that should his speech be inspired by this spirit it would be cordially welcomed and might be publicly endorsed on behalf of the British delegation.

These expectations were fulfilled. Mr. Briand's speech was all that could be desired. It was clear, concise, matter of fact and eloquent by turns, dramatic in its very simplicity, and moving by reason of the profound pathos that ran through the main portions of it. It was not so much an indictment of Germany as an analysis of the true condition of Germany and a vindication of the precautions which a peace-loving France is, in duty to herself and to the cause for which she, with her Allies and associates, victoriously fought, bound to maintain. It raised in pertinent form the question whether in discharging this duty France is to stand alone, in moral isolation, or whether she will be comforted and surrounded by the good will and support of her comrades in arms.

#### Balfour Never More Sincere.

To this question Mr. Balfour straightway made reply. There may have been moments in his life when he has been more eloquent, or, at any rate, more elegantly certain of his phrase. There can never have been a moment when he was more obviously sincere or more moved. In effect, he said that to raise the question in the presence of the delegates of the British Empire was to answer it. Had not the peoples of the British Empire, who were only one of the allies and associates of France, given nearly a million lives in defence of the cause of liberty for which France stood, and had they not suffered in addition more than two million casualties? They grieved at these losses. They did not regret them. And since their views of the sanctity of the cause were unchanged, as was their conviction of the necessity of the war, could it be doubted that, should a like emergency recur,

they would again sacrifice themselves without stint?

For France to stand in moral isolation would be a tragedy indeed. We therefore supported and accepted Mr. Briand's speech with all his heart, and urged it upon the attention of the citizens of the United States, whose happy lot it is to know nothing of the terrors and the dangers amid which France lives and has her being. He wished France every success upon the path of unaggressive prosperity she had elected to follow.

In the bright light of this glowing utterance, the speeches of the Italian, Japanese and Belgian representatives seemed a little pale, but when Mr. Hughes's voice rang out, with its vibrating note of American goodwill towards France and his assurance that there are no limitations for those who defend liberty, the proceedings rose again to a rare degree of incandescence.

It was a great moment and a great sitting. It helped the work of peace goodwill among the nations yet another step forward along the road on which the Washington conference already stands as a mighty landmark.

#### GUIDANCE FOR PARLEY INVOKED BY PONTIFF

He Hopes Danger of Wars  
Will Be Removed.

Rome, Nov. 21 (Associated Press).—Pope Benedict in his allocution delivered at to-day's secret consistory dealt with the subject of disarmament, expressing gratification at the calling of the Washington conference. In striving for the good and well being of the peoples through the operation of reason and experience, said the allocution, "it would be a mistake to count alone on these means and not invoke the aid of God." Referring to the representatives of the nations now meeting in Washington the allocution says:

"Not alone do we warmly hope that their labors may have a happy success, but, unitedly, for the good of all, we pray God that He may aid them with light, that they may determine not alone how to lighten the heavy burdens of the peoples, which is no small thing, but a thing which matters much more—to make as remote as possible for evermore the dangers of new wars."


The Vatican's relations with new States and how the new agreements were established between them and the Holy See were recounted by His Holiness. He deplored the unrest observable in them and added:

"We note with grief that the solemn treaty of peace has not brought about peace of mind."

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